

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

August 3, 1961

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Berlin Negotiations and your Meeting with Mr. Rusk
at 4 PM

The Secretary of State yesterday gave you two papers on Berlin negotiations, and they raise certain questions which you and he need to decide before he goes into the Foreign Ministers Meeting over the week end. The papers have not yet been read by any members of the Steering Group except the Secretary and myself, but some of the issues received preliminary discussion there on Wednesday afternoon. Your last talk with the Secretary will be at four o'clock this afternoon. He leaves at midnight.

The two papers are thoughtful and careful, and in their basic outlines much alike. One comes to the Secretary from Dean Acheson and the other from George McGhee's staff. Both are heavily influenced by the indefatigable staff work of Henry Owen. The issues which need to be decided today are relatively small. Some larger questions may need further planning and thought.

Both papers divide the Berlin problem into three phases:

- Phase I. From now to the German elections on September 17th.
- Phase II. From the German elections to the possible signing of a separate peace treaty.
- Phase III. After the peace treaty.

The immediate questions pertain largely to Phase I, slightly to Phase II, and in only one respect to Phase III.

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BY R. J. R. NAME DATE 12/85

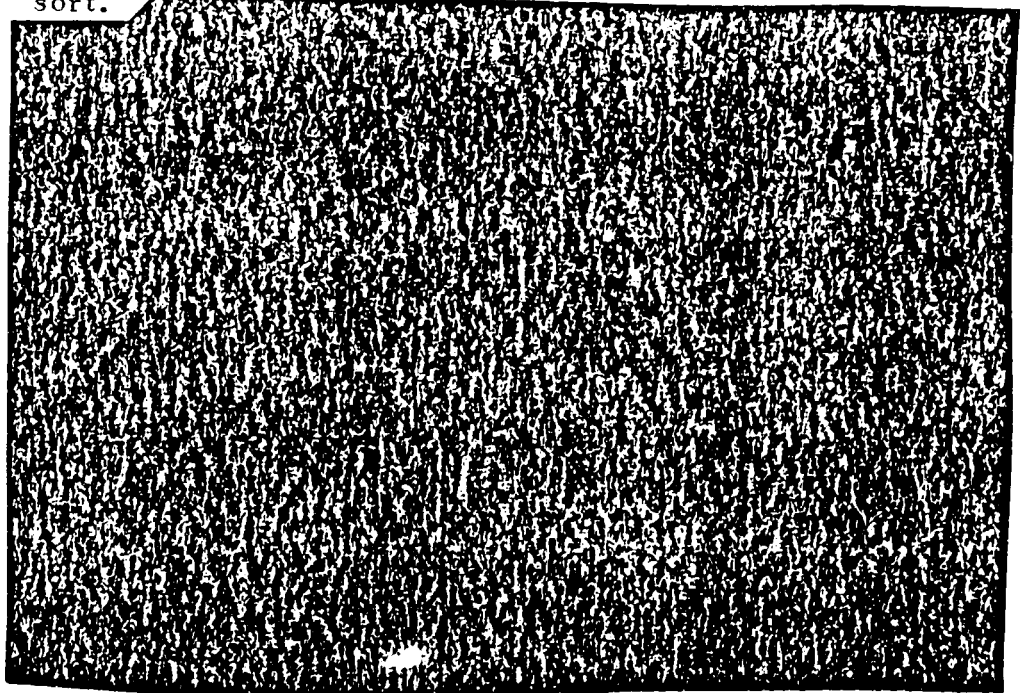
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PHASE I

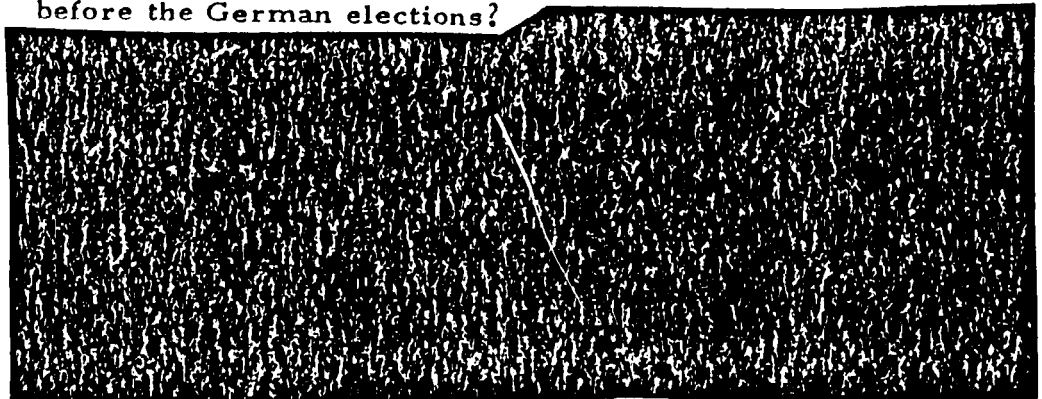
There is general agreement on the following points in this Phase:

1. There should be no actual negotiations of a formal sort.

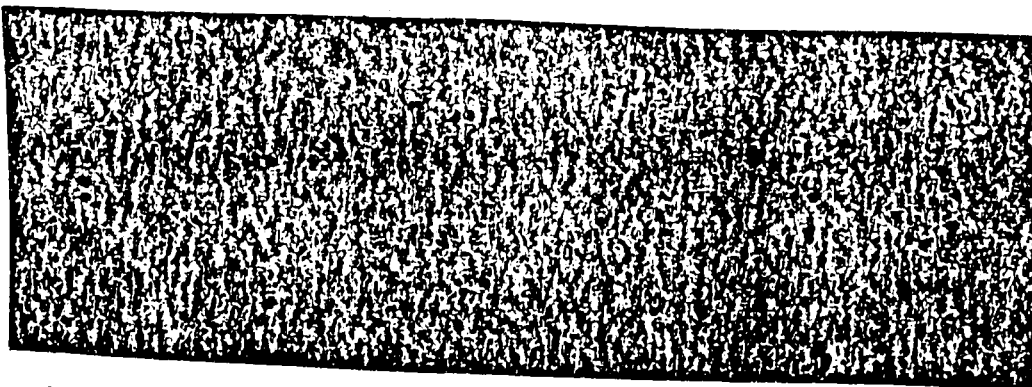


Undecided questions about Phase I are as follows, and all of them need attention at your meeting this afternoon:

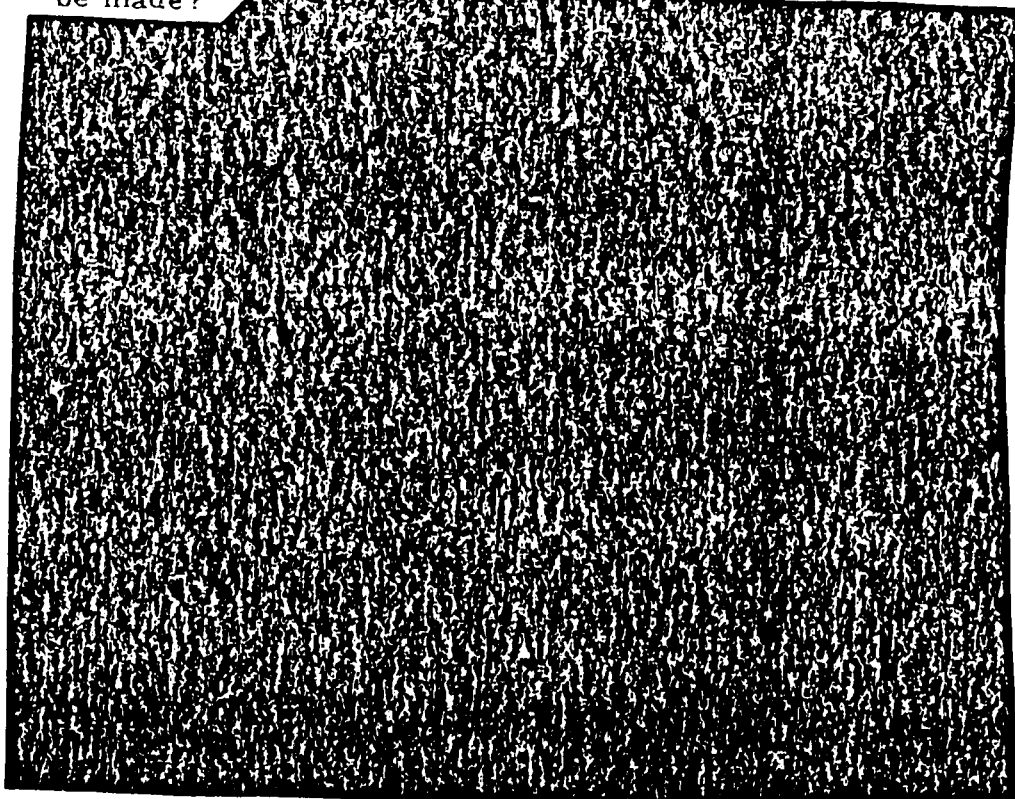
1. Should there be a "quiet approach" to the Soviets before the German elections?



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2. If there is agreement on a Western proposal for a Foreign Ministers meeting, when should this proposal be made?



4. The timing and location of a Western summit deserves some thought. The Secretary's current notion is Bermuda in early October. He quite rightly wants it to be far enough from Europe so that Khrushchev cannot

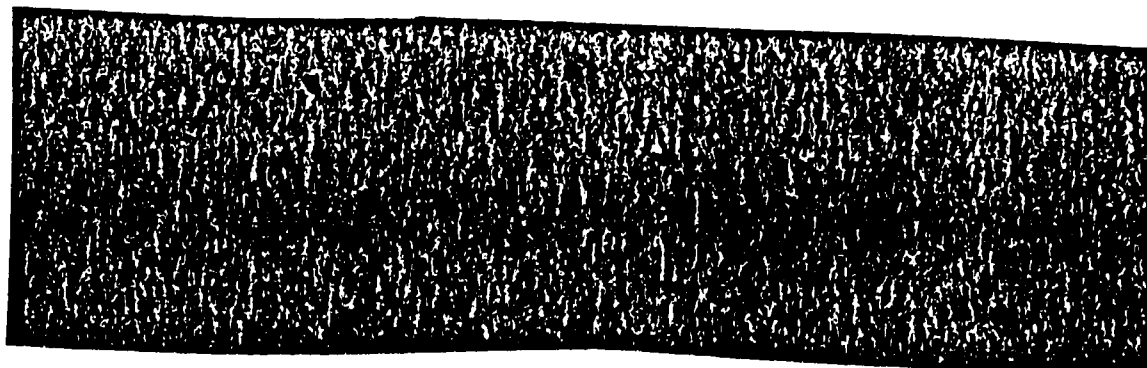
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wedge himself in. My own question is whether Washington would not be better, or even, conceivably, Hyannis Port if you wanted relative privacy and a really small working group. The hazard of a Western summit is that it will be a big and untidy affair, when the real purpose is to bring your personal authority and leadership to bear on a handful of men.

5. On one further matter there is no disagreement but your own leadership and pressure are important -- propaganda. It is agreed that we should use the next two months energetically to advance understanding of our position and of the low character of the Soviet effort. It is also generally agreed that leadership here should be placed in USIA (although the Acheson report suggests a new Special Assistant to the Secretary of State). The real problem is that the center of international sympathy should be directed toward people of West Berlin and not toward the official position of the U. S. Government, and this takes some doing. The Acheson report states well and strongly the four central themes of freedom, peace, faithful trusteeship and self-determination. We are for all four, and the Soviets are currently in fact against them all on Berlin.

PHASE II



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Until you have time to study and master the details of the two proposals, I doubt if you and the Secretary could usefully get very far into this question. It may be best if you simply ask him how far he means to go in the discussion of the substance of negotiating proposals in Paris. My own response to a study of these papers is that they are sensible within their limits. They do not, in my judgment, adequately examine wider alternatives like calling a peace conference, or proposing that the United Nations have a role in Berlin.

PHASE III

In Phase III, the questions all turn around this general problem: what form of interference with access to Berlin triggers what form of response? These questions are very hard ones, and the consensus of the Steering Group yesterday was that they need not have first priority attention for the coming meeting. But as General Taylor points out, it is going to be important to have a clear view on some of these issues fairly soon, and certainly before any Western summit we should have views of our own and they should have been argued in the appropriate forum -- possibly that of the Defense Ministers.

McG. B.

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